Environmental Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region:

views of the Ministry of the Environment of Estonia

Andres Kratovitš

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MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The main milestones of Environmental Policy in Estonia

- Act on Sustainable Development (adopted February 22nd, 1995), National Strategy on SD (March 2005)
- National Environmental Strategy
  - –(March 17th,1997, new Strategy is being elaborated)
- National Environmental Action Plan-NEAP
  - –(May 26th, 1998; updated Spring 2001, new is being elaborated)
- Global and regional cooperation
- EU Environmental Acquis

- National Strategy on Sustainable Development - 2001 - 2003
  - –three priority goals
    - vitality of Estonia`s cultural space
    - growth of people`s welfare
    - ecologically balanced development
  - –need to establish proper decision-making institutional mechanism

Priority Environmental Problems according to the NES

- Pollution of ambient and urban air
- past pollution
- damaged landscapes
- decrease in water quantity
- pollution and eutrophication of surface waterbodies
- waste management
- threats to biodiversity
- problems with built environment

10 Policy Goals of the Estonian National Environmental Strategy

- Environmental Awareness
- Clean Technologies
- Energy Sector
- Air Quality
- Waste Management
- Past Pollution
- Groundwater Resources
- Surface and Coastal Water
- Landscape and Biodiversity
- Modification of Built Environment

Global and regional environmental cooperation

- More than 40 environmental conventions or other international legal instruments ratified or acceded to, since 1991
- Rio 1992 Summit and related Conventions
- UN ECE Conventions
- Conventions and processes in the Baltic Sea area
- Helsinki Convention
- Gdansk Convention
- Baltic 21
- Baltic cooperation
- Emerging Nordic-Baltic cooperation

Bilateral agreements

- 27 bilateral agreements (without fisheries agreements) mainly with the Baltic Sea countries
- 8 agreements with Finland (framework, water protection, air protection, oil-spills, EIA, climate change - Joint Implementation)
- 3 agreements with Denmark (framework, radiation protection)
- 3 agreements with Latvia (framework, EIA, nature protection)
- 2 agreements with Germany (framework)
- 2 agreements with Lithuania (framework, hazardous waste)
- 2 agreements with the Russian Federation (framework, transboundary waters)

Benefits from cooperation within the Baltic Sea region

- Environmental benefits
- Emissions into atmosphere
- NO_x -41%
- VOC -52%
- SO_2 -60%
- solid particles -74%
- CO_2 -56%
- CH_4 -42%
- N_2O -67%

Benefits from cooperation within the Baltic Sea region

- Environmental benefits

Pollution load of discharged wastewater

- N_{tot} -50%
- P_{tot} -65%
- BOD_7 -82%

- Benefits from cooperation within the Baltic Sea region
- Financial benefits
- More than 300 bilateral projects (1992-2002)
- Bilateral assistance more than 2.5 billion EEK
- Biggest bilateral donors Denmark, Finland, Sweden
- Main sectors – wastewater treatment, waste management, air protection
- Preparation to work with the EU Structural Funds

- Benefits from cooperation within the Baltic Sea region

- Political benefits

- Assistance to establish legal framework for environmental protection and draft the main environmental policy documents

- Technical assistance and cooperation

- Personal contacts

- Experience to work within international context

- Take over the EU environmental *Acquis*

- Benefits from cooperation within the Baltic Sea region
- Guidance towards becoming member of international environmental community
- Regional cooperation
- Global cooperation